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Martin Luther King, Jr.

332 AUBURN AVENUE, N. E.
ATLANTA, GA.

February, 1965

Dear Friend:

The glare of headlines, spotlighting our other desegregation campaigns, has often obscured news of the steadily rising rate of Negro voter-registration in the South.

In the past four years the Negro vote in the South has been doubled.

This achievement is simple to express in words, but in actuality it is the sum of an epic of heroic struggle. It required tens of thousands of registration workers to endure long weary days and nights to make it real. It required the courage to face a grisly death around any corner; it required almost saintly patience to add one name to another, laboriously, until two million names accumulated in registration books in 11 states. Finally, it required the will to go forward after burying our dead because somehow we could never go back.

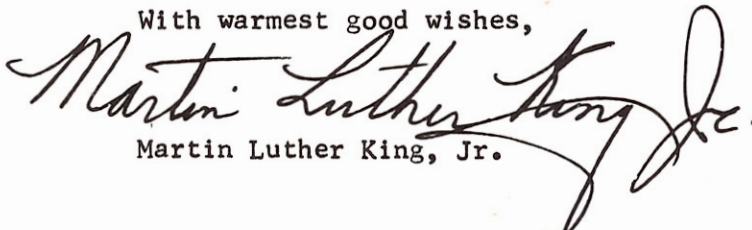
Now that this is done we begin again, because we must, in concert with other organizations, double the vote once more. Only then will we have the political strength to:

1. Curb the resort to violence of many segregationist leaders in elected posts by shifting the balance of power to a Negro-white coalition which can accomplish peaceful, meaningful change.
2. Send to Congress from the South, forward looking decent minded men, Negro and white, to replace those whose poverty of spirit and want of humanity are a mockery to a national legislative body.
3. Spur the war on poverty where American destitution is the worst -- in the rural South of the Negro - where literal starvation exists today amid the abundance of an affluent society.

Our organization, SCLC, is occupied seven days a week doing our share in this work, as well as other vitally important activities not reflected in headlines. Our salaried staff people are in over twenty Southern cities. We service hundreds of communities from Atlanta. We conduct hundreds of permanently established citizenship training classes to remedy the faulty education Negroes have received. In addition, literacy education is provided for the wholly uneducated. These remarkable schools which penetrate some of the deepest backwaters of the South, are an example of Negro self-help unique in our movement.

The dedicated allies doing this work are committing their lives. Negroes contribute funds and services, but poverty limits their aid. To advance our work they have endured brutality, violence and even death. We ask you to be a part of this moral crusade in the most meaningful way - by contributing sorely needed funds. You will aid one part of the population and yet all of the nation.

With warmest good wishes,


Martin Luther King, Jr.

Please make check
payable to SCLC.